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Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 16

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Annual report on racial discrimination submitted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1588 (L) and General Assembly resolution 2785 (XXVI)

UNESCO contribution to the inter-agency consultation on the co-ordination of activities of the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination

(March-April 1991)

I. "FOCAL POINT"

1. The programme actions aimed at combating racism and racial discrimination, and the Special Project entitled "Establishment in South Africa of an egalitarian, non-racial society free from apartheid and reconciled with itself", fall within the purview of Mrs. María Elena de Saint Didier, Programme Officer in the Division of Human Rights and Peace. The Division, run by Mr. Janusz Symonides, is part of the Social and Human Sciences Sector, headed by the Assistant Director-General, Mrs. Francine Fournier.

II. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 1991

2. Under the programme and budget for 1990-1991, the following activities will be undertaken:

(a) Synopsis of studies by UNESCO on apartheid (publication and distribution of a booket);

(b) Studies and organization of a working group on alternative policies in an apartheid-free South Africa (in collaboration with the Centre for Social Research, a working group meeting on access of Africans to science and technology, in Porto Novo, Benin, September 1991);

(c) Consultation on religions and apartheid (in principle at Geneva, June 1991, in collaboration with the World Council of Churches);

(d) Workshop on issues of human rights in South Africa (meeting in Banjul, Gambia, April 1991, in collaboration with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;

(e) Upgrading of skills and training of South African personnel (scholarships and study grants, secondment of research workers and students);

(f) Pilot project in southern Africa with a view to creating a documentation centre (contract with International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF) to carry out a feasibility study);

(g) Creation of a unit on southern Africa within the documentation centre of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (contract with the Commission);

(h) Publication of a booklet Towards a New South Africa;

(i) Migrants and Europe in 1992 (organization of a meeting in Malta, under an agreement with ISA Research Committee on Race, Ethnicity and Minority Relations, in the first half of 1991);

(j) Support for organizing a colloquium on the decolonization of imagination, May 1991 in Amsterdam, Netherlands (support contract with the Transnational Institute).

3. With regard to items (b), (c), (d) and (g), UNESCO has invited the Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations Centre against Apartheid to make a technical and financial contribution so as to conduct these activities on a joint basis. Close collaboration has already been established with the Centre for Human Rights and the activities in question are prepared in consultation with the Centre.

4. UNESCO would also like the United Nations Centre against Apartheid, the Special Committee against Apartheid, the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, and the relevant regional intergovernmental agencies and international non-governmental agencies to join in carrying out the activities.

III. PROGRAMME FOR 1991-1993

5. UNESCO is currently preparing the draft budget and programme for 1992-1993. This is the second phase of the Third Medium-Term Plan (1990-1995). The draft (document 26C/5) will be submitted to the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-sixth session, in October 1991.

6. As to the Special Project on apartheid, UNESCO, in close co-operation with the Centre for Human Rights, the United Nations Centre against Apartheid and the Special Committee against Apartheid, will continue its future-oriented analysis of the situation in South Africa. On the basis of work undertaken in 1990 and 1991, UNESCO will contribute to the formulation of policies for the post-apartheid period, in collaboration with liberation movements, research institutions and democratic anti-apartheid forces. The studies and reports prepared in 1991 will be widely distributed. A special effort will be made with regard to training.

7. UNESCO, in its struggle against all forms of discrimination, plans to focus its programme on protecting and promoting the cultural rights of minorities, indigenous persons, migrant workers and their families, religious groups and non-citizens.

8. Lastly, UNESCO will continue its activities aimed at implementing the Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms (adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, in Paris, on 19 November 1974). Studies will also continue into measures which hinder or foster tolerance and understanding. Specific programmes to promote a culture of democracy and peace will be developed throughout the biennium (1992-1993).

IV. JOINT ACTIVITIES

9. In addition to co-operation in the implementation of activities planned for 1991 (see para. 3 of this document), informal consultations have already been held with the Centre for Human Rights with a view to organizing practical training in the appropriate departments of the various agencies in the United Nations system, for human rights specialists from national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). A scholarship system would be needed so that cadres from these movements could attend human rights courses in Strasbourg and Geneva, followed by training periods of one or two months at Geneva, Paris and New York. With the collaboration of regional agencies, courses and training periods could be organized at the European Court of Human Rights, the European Commission of Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

10. Informal consultations have also been held with a view to creating networks of documentation centres on South Africa. UNESCO thus welcomes the proposal (para. 16 (b) of the report on the first inter-agency consultation) jointly to establish a United Nations data base on the research, documentation and activities of the United Nations and the specialized agencies relating to racism, racial discrimination and apartheid.

11. The possibility of jointly preparing and publishing an anthology about the struggle against apartheid has also been examined with the Centre for Human Rights. This would involve gathering poems, novels, declarations, speeches, etc. from all over the world.

12. Working meetings have been held with the Centre for Human Rights and, in particular, with the International Labour Organisation for joint formulation and implementation of a programme of activities for the International Year for Indigenous Rights (1993).

V. PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION

13. Recently, UNESCO has made every effort to develop collaboration with the United Nations and the specialized agencies. Its invitation to other agencies, to collaborate technically and financially in the implementation of its own programme activities has not always met with a prompt and appropriate response. Moreover, often there is no follow-up to decisions taken during inter-agency consultations.

14. From experience, UNESCO considers that it is pointless to hope to promote co-ordination and co-operation in the abstract, without a joint, specific and concrete programme. From the point of view of the Organization, the second inter-agency consultation should, with a view to improving co-operation and co-ordination, consider the following areas:

(a) The formulation of a programme of activities which would be held on a joint basis:

(i) studies and research;

(ii) publications;

(iii) meetings;

(iv) production of educational and informational material;

(v) creation of a data base;

(b) Establishment of a co-ordinating unit (committee or commission) consisting of the focal points from each agency. The task of the co-ordinating unit would be to implement the joint programme and, if required, to find extra-budgetary funds. The members would have to keep each other informed of all activities, decisions, correspondence, etc., relating to their joint programme;

(c) The annual inter-agency meetings should determine the general policy, strategy and procedures for action. The follow-up should be the responsibility of a standing committee on co-ordination;

(d) The inter-agency consultations should always be convened, as with the second consultation, four or five months in advance, to allow time to decide upon a specific agenda. In the event of half-day consultations, the meeting should preferably be held in the afternoon. The representatives from UNESCO, for example, could then make the return journey by TGV in one day.

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EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF BODIES ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

Computerization of the work of human rights treaty-monitoring bodies in relation to reporting systems

Report of the Secretary-General

1. It will be recalled that the Task Force on Computerization, appointed by the Secretary-General pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1989/46 of 6 March 1989, recommended the establishment of a computerized data base to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the international human rights treaty-monitoring bodies. The recommendations of the Task Force, as contained in chapter IV of the annex to document E/CN.4/1990/39, were approved by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-sixth session by resolution 1990/21 of 23 February 1990.

2. In that same resolution, the Commission recommended to States Members of the United Nations, in particular those States which are parties to United Nations human rights instruments, to make generous contributions to cover the estimated initial, one-time only, cost of the proposed system, as shown in paragraph 63 of document E/CN.4/1990/39. Furthermore, the Commission strongly recommended that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly approve the recurrent cost of the system and authorize the inclusion of the annual recurrent cost in the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, when the proposed system is expected to become operational. The Commission also requested the Secretary-General to report to its forty-seventh session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

3. By its decision 1990/226 of 25 May 1990, the Economic and Social Council noted Commission on Human Rights resolution 1990/21 of 23 February 1990, approved the annual recurrent cost of the system proposed by the Task Force on Computerization and requested the Secretary-General to include the annual recurrent cost in the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

4. The General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, by its resolution 45/85 of 14 December 1990, inter alia, took note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1990/21 of 23 February 1990 and of Economic and Social Council decision 1990/226 of 25 May 1990, and requested the Secretary-General to give high priority to establishing the computerized data base.

5. Pursuant to paragraph 5 of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1990/21, the Secretary-General intends shortly to invite States Members of the United Nations, in particular those States which are parties to United Nations human rights instruments, to make generous contributions to cover the estimated initial, one-time cost of the proposed system.

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